Darwin Initiative

Workshop for Stage 2 Applicants

7th November 2013

ZSL

Zoological Society of London

Regent's Park

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Workshop for New Darwin Projects

22nd March 2013

Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs

The Darwin Initiative hosted a workshop at ZSL on November 7th for all applicants who made it to stage 2 of the Main project funding of the Darwin Initiative for Round 20. The workshop was open to one staff member of stage 2 applications and had the following objectives:

- To better understand DFID requirements for applications
- To better understand how to evaluate impact and measure success for DI applications
- Identify ways to improve applications related to M&E requirements
- To ask other questions from the application process

The agenda from the day's activities:

- Evaluating Impact and Measuring Success
- Setting your objectives
- Measuring impact vs. activity
- SMART indicators
- Developing an M&E plan

This is a short note covering the presentations that were given that day. All the presentation slides from this workshop are also available via the Darwin website for reference.

1. Frequently Asked Questions

Questions gathered via email were reviewed and answered and captured in this section. In addition, this section highlights some discussions that were held regarding technical questions.

Specifically raised questions:

- Question 4 asks for a repetition of Q24 – is this correct or should it be Q25?

There is an error in the numbering in Question 4 and the correct cross reference should be to Q25 (not Q24).

- FCO notifications: we are based and registered in country – do we still need to contact the UK High Commission?

While it is not a requirement, it is recommended you discuss your plans with the local High Commission. Many are keen to understand and co-ordinate plans for projects in-country and are interested in knowing about potential UK grants to the country they are working in.

- What are you looking for in terms of comments on gender issues?

We are interesting in understanding if your project will identify befits for different gender groups, particularly if this targets women. We do not expect this will necessarily be relevant for all Darwin projects but if your work can identify benefits for women, we are keen to understand the implications.

- Some baseline information is not available as this is what the project needs to quantify so including milestones is difficult. Any advice?

If an application includes the establishment of a baseline, eg to establish how many endangered frogs are located in the intervention site in order to monitor progress and the change of state caused by the project activities, the milestones included in the application logframe are based on estimates and background knowledge. Upon award, and subsequent undertaking of the baseline, if the actual conditions appear significantly different to the estimated ones, there are opportunities to revise milestones and indicators. This means that in your applications, these milestones should still be SMART to demonstrate to the Darwin Expert Committee (DEC) that you understand how to measure progress against the baseline.

- Darwin standard measures. It seems that Darwin would like these incorporated (even though the logframe is now the main means of M&E) - but where?

We no longer require applicants to provide this information, but we are currently still keen to track this data through a project, to add to our 20+ year dataset of statistics on the outcomes of the Darwin Initiative. If your project is successful, you will be asked to report on the Standard Measures in your annual and final reports.

Frequently raised questions:

- How should we include Full Economic Costing? And 40% of what – salary costs, overheads/estate costs?

Please use the information in the Guidance Notes as a basis for your costing. However, we recognise that this guidance is not exhaustive and there can be different interpretations. Please cost your project as you deem appropriate and include any specific costs that your institution requires. The decision process make identify some high costs for further discussion, but they will not be a deciding factor in whether or not an application is successful.

Another useful consideration is whether your organisation would be willing to cover these costs as your contribution to matched funding – so you can show the necessary costs in your budget, but reflect them as a contribution instead of a request to Darwin.

- Can we change our budget request/Project Leader/partners between Stage 1 and Stage 2?

Yes – you are free to change any part of your application between Stage 1 and Stage 2. However, if you make significant changes (such as budget total, project leader, partners) it is recommended you clearly address why these things have changed. The cover letter is a useful way to address issues that may not fall into an obvious section of the application form.

- Can we add lines to the budget spreadsheet?

We expect that the lines we have included should be enough – and that you can summaries may items on one line (eg don't list lots of field items such as tents, boots, waterproof jackets – just summarise as field items). If you have a specific need for additional lines, we can add them in, if you send us your budget spreadsheet. We are keen to keep the formulae and links protected to ensure the summary information across the sheets remains correct.

- In the Workplan, do the 'months' need to match the boxes highlighted?

No. The 'months' column should cover the number of months that will be spent on the activity during the project, while the boxes should indicate when the activities will happen. For example, you may maintain a project website where the activity runs throughout the project, but the total time being put into the work may only be a month per year.

- What CVs do we need to submit?

You must submit a one page CV for anyone named in Q7. We would also recommend including a CV of anyone who will work a significant part of the time on the project – such as a Project Officer. This will not be evaluated but would be useful information to understand the more day to day support available to the project.

- Can you accept any materials after the deadline?

The deadline is fixed and the application must be submitted on time. If necessary, we will accept Letters of Support after this time but only material submitted by the deadline will be guaranteed to be evaluated. If you have a significant specific problem on the submission date, please get in touch directly to discuss your options.

- Can I submit additional materials to support my application?

The best way to provide additional specific information is to include weblinks in your application form but please ensure they are relevant and that they work. It is unlikely you will need to submit anything else, if you have completed the application form effectively.

- How can I respond to the comments raised at Stage 1?

As far as possible, this should be done in the relevant place in the Stage 2 application form. However, you may need to include additional information in a cover letter, specifically if you are outlining how you have addressed feedback from Stage 1.

ODA requirements

There was a discussion on the specific ODA requirements. It was reiterated that the first review is the project country. Fully eligible countries are in the first three columns of the following link http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/9/50/48858205.pdf

It was also noted that neither India nor South Africa were eligible for DFID funding in this round, irrespective of where they appear in the table.

If the project is located in an Upper Middle Income country, the project must demonstrate that it meets one of the following criteria:

a. advancing knowledge, evidence and impact in other least developed or low income countries, either within the same region or other regions;

b. delivering global public goods benefits by, for example, advancing our understanding of local - global impacts and/or strengthening understanding of/evidence for global dimensions of biodiversity conservation/sustainable use and poverty reduction;

c. making serious and unique research advancements on a critical issue as a result of specific circumstances of the middle income country, that could not be made elsewhere.

Projects must also have a direct or indirect positive impact on the economic environment and welfare of developing countries. Applications are reviewed to ensure they are compliant with ODA requirements and DFID is able to fund them.

2. Evaluating Impact and Measuring Success

1. Introduction

Without monitoring progress, and measuring success, how do you know you have delivered the changes that you set out to, and whether those changes are likely to have positive long lasting effects that contribute to the objectives and goals of the Darwin Initiative?

If well designed, monitoring and evaluation is not costly to implement and is cost effective because it helps you improve the efficiency and effectiveness of your project through its life cycle.

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is a critical part of ensuring a project performs and delivers meaningful change. M&E allows you to keep the project relevant, and the resources of the project (people, funds, techniques) deployed in the right way to deliver. At its simplest, it provides a way to measure progress.

Thinking of M&E from the beginning of project design allows for improvements in project design as well as targets and achievements that are measureable and meaningful.

The Darwin Initiative has to demonstrate (ultimately to the UK Parliament) cost effectiveness and results. This puts greater emphasis on projects to measure their successes, and most importantly, impact.

Within a results-oriented environment, the emphasis of M&E is on:

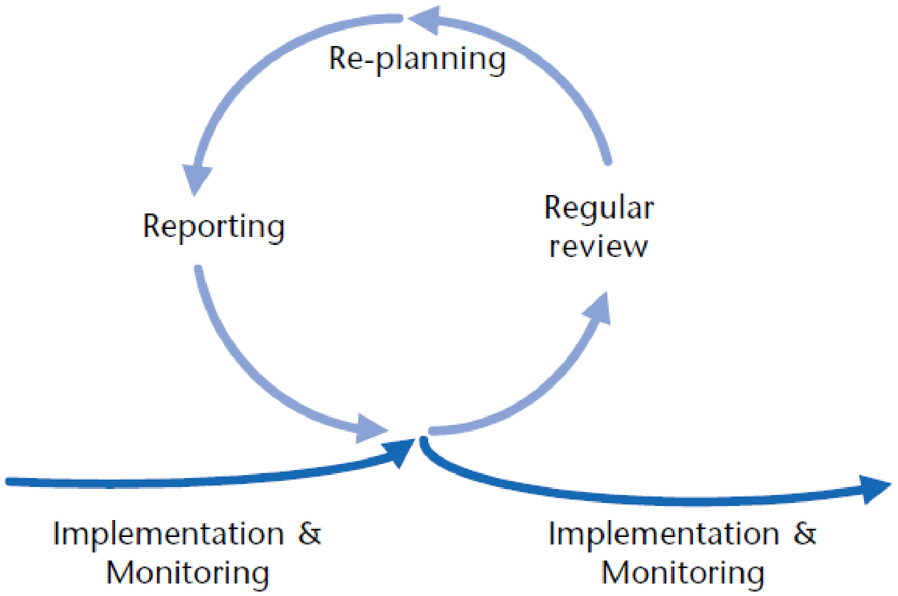
- active learning through application of M&E information to the continuous improvement of strategies, programmes and other activities;
- monitoring of progress towards development results instead of just inputs and implementation processes; and
- results in real time as they emerge instead of after the project is completed;

The Terminology:

Monitoring is the collection of information about a project over time. It seeks to understand what is happening as the project progresses in order to keep it on track.

Monitoring should be used in a 'plan-do-check-act' adaptive management cycle that:

- Allows you to see that the project will be effective and is well managed.
- Keeps the project relevant & feasible
- Allows you to keep track of the progress towards achievement of intended outcomes
- Keeps delivery efficient & cost effective



Evaluation is an assessment of the project at one point in time, including the successes and failures to create impact, what happened and why, and to learn lessons.

Evaluation involves interrogating information from the monitoring system, including output and result level indicators, and other sources to find out and explain the effects of the interventions. For evaluations, the most important aspects are the extent to which the project activities are delivering the changes (Project Outcomes) that are envisaged, and the impact that change is having on the beneficiaries (project Impact or Goal).

Evaluations are usually undertaken by third parties.

Indicators represent a major source of information for M&E and are used to monitor progress through agreed upon means of verification.

Baselines provide the initial values against which an indicator (and progress of the project) is subsequently measured. Baseline data are indispensable if project indicators are to be meaningful because they put the measures of a programme into their context.

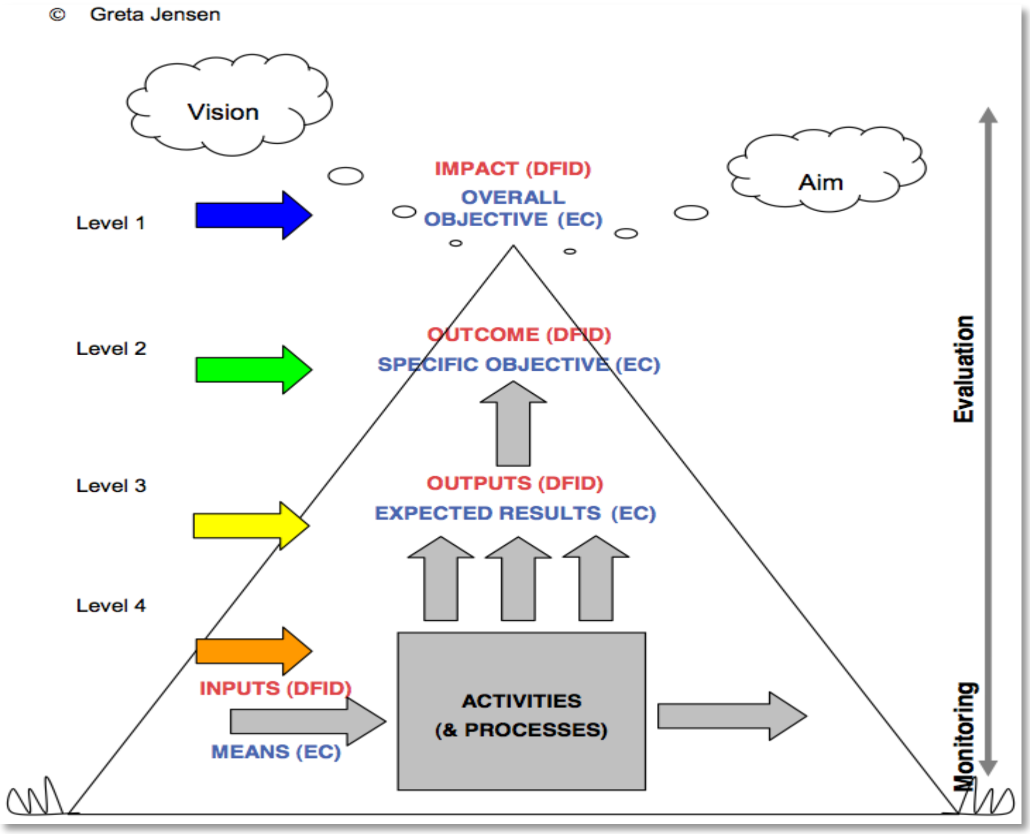
2. Setting Objectives: some jargon-busting & practical tips

Problem analysis & setting objectives

- The more information & understanding one has about the problem situation, the more specifically one can formulate objectives.
- Various Problem Analysis methods: Symptoms vs Causes, Identification of Drivers, Problem Trees, Problem Rivers, etc.
- Problems can be transformed into objectives by mirror-imaging and restating the negatives as positives

Objective Setting

- The purpose of setting objectives for a project is to define what you are aiming at (the desired future situation), in order that you can then work out a plan of action to achieve and measure the performance of it
- During implementation, progress is monitored to determine whether the project is still on track towards achieving its objectives.
- There are 2 main types of Objective: Overall/Impact & Specific/Outcome
- See figure below for naming/jargon comparisons



Logframes- a tool for monitoring and evaluation.

- In the Logframe narrative, the intervention logic of the project is set out and the important assumptions and risks which underlie this logic are described.
- This provides the basis for checking the feasibility and theory of change of the project, ensuring that improbable assumptions or undue risks are carefully assessed.
- When developing a Logframe, the general rule/tip is to ‘Think upwards, Plan downwards’

3. Measuring impact vs. activity

The Darwin Initiative is a results-focused fund which emphasises measuring impact. As a government fund, the Darwin Initiative must be fully accountable for its actions and funded projects. In addition, DFID, one of the funders of the Darwin Initiative, is bound by the International Development Act (2007) with funds classified as Official Development Assistance (ODA) which places certain requirements on DFID's reporting and accountability.

DFID uses the definition of evaluation agreed by the OECD Development Assistance Committee and widely accepted by the international development community:

"*The systematic and objective assessment of an on-going or completed project, programme or policy, its design, implementation, and results in relation to specified evaluation criteria."*

There are numerous resources available that provide useful step-by-step instructions for developing project level monitoring and evaluation systems including handy toolkits. Some of these resources include:

- DFID How To note: Guidance on using the revised logical framework
  http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Documents/publications1/how-to-guid-rev-log-fmwk.pdf
- World Bank Monitoring and Evaluation: Some tools, methods and approaches
  http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTEVACAPDEV/Resources/4585672-1251481378590/MandE_tools_methods_approaches.pdf
- Rogers 2012 Introduction to Impact Evaluation
  http://www.interaction.org/document/introduction-impact-evaluation

Impact

The impact statement is a long-term objective that the project aims to achieve but is outside of the timeframe of the proposed project. The Impact is not intended to be achieved solely by the project, but is a higher-level change or state that the project will contribute to. All Darwin projects funded by DFID are expected to contribute to poverty reduction and sustainable management of biodiversity and its products, while those funded by Defra are expected to contribute to sustainable management of biodiversity and its products.

- Higher level Objective of the wider sectoral or national programme, to which the project is designed to contribute (in the longer run) to, for example, Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) and/or DI related Conventions
- Use the infinitive of a verb for describing your overall objective: e.g. "to mitigate the negative impact of migration on family members' rights in countries of origin".

Outcome

The outcome statement is the overarching objective of the project you have designed. That is, the achievement expected as a result of this project. There can only be one Outcome for the project and the outcome should identify what will change, how it will change and who will benefit.

- Should clearly describe the new/changed situation(s) you want to achieve
- State what the project should achieve for its intended beneficiaries
- They should be realistically achievable by the end of the funding period or shortly thereafter.
- Use the infinitive of a verb to begin the wording of your specific objective(s): "to provide leisure activities and psychological services to the children of migrants in XY"

Measuring outcome – indicators

Indicators are the tools and mechanisms you will use to measure the changes your project is achieving. Indicators should be useful both for internal reflection but also for external reporting. They should allow you to demonstrate what you have achieved, how it was achieved and when.

Indicators at the 'outcome' level (relatively high level indicators) may not be achieved until the closing stages of your project. It is therefore advisable to break these indicators down into milestones so that project progress can be assessed at regular intervals, not just at the project's end.

The best indicators are quantifiable as well as qualitative and provide an indication of performance. It is unlikely that one indicator will be sufficient at this level. The indicators should ideally cover not only environmental aspects, but also social, economic and institutional elements of intended change. It is also important to provide sufficient detail of what you will measure to assess your progress towards achieving this outcome.

Outputs

Outputs are the specific, direct deliverables of the project. These will provide the conditions necessary to achieve the Outcome. The logic of the chain from Output to Outcome therefore needs to be clear. Most projects should aim to include 3 or 4 Outputs in order to achieve the intended Outcome. Rule of thumb suggests more than 5 Outputs for a project the size of Darwin Initiative projects is excessively complex. It is often the case that 2 or more Outputs can be combined since they are steps towards the same 'deliverable'.

Measuring outputs

Much the same as for measuring Outcomes, a series of indicators for each Output is expected. These indicators should allow you to measure the change effected by your project and your progress towards achieving the Outputs. The Output level indicators should not be a rewording of activities but capture quality as well as quantity: for example what was the outcome of training, not simply that it was carried out. Darwin requires projects to measure and report progress against Outputs annually.

Activities and production of deliverables do not necessarily result in impact. Additionally while activities are easy to describe/discuss, they should not be the only measures of progress.

4. SMART Indicators

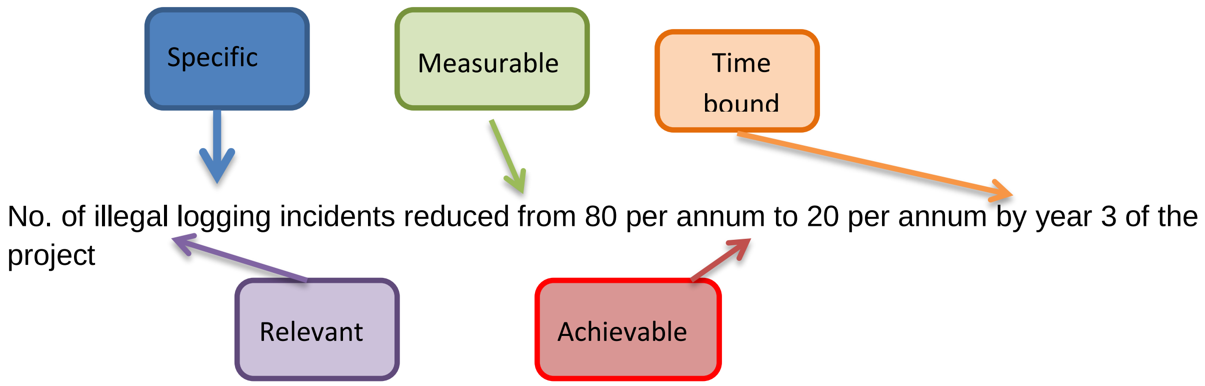
This monitoring and reporting should be done against **SMART Indicators**

Indicators need to be

Specific to the objective it is supposed to measure
Measurable (either quantitatively or qualitatively)
Achievable by the project and available at an acceptable cost
Relevant to the information needs of managers
Time-bound – so we know when we can expect the objective/target to be achieved

Example 1:

Output	Indicators
Deforestation pressure reduced on a rare Truffula tree forest) through micro-credit compensation scheme established for forest dependant households.	Number of illegal logging incidents reduced from 80 per annum to 20 per annum by year 3 of the project
	Number of micro-credit transactions completed increases from 0 per annum to 60 by year 3 of the project
	Recordings of illegal timber of truffula trees in local market drops from 10 per visit to 1 by year 3.



Example 2

Output	Indicators
Greater capacity for conservation of Truffula tree forests	Five students attain MSc qualification by year 2 of the project with dissertations focusing on issues re Truffula tree forests
	4 of the 5 MSc graduates retained in full time employment supporting conservation of xx forests by year 3 of the project.
	NGO established and funded to support Truffula tree conservation by year 3.

Below sets out some examples of indicators that could be smartened. [Derived in part from previous Darwin applications- PLEASE NOTE that these indicators are not for 1 project)
(Example doesn't allow you to check 'achievable' or 'relevance' as it is a 'blank' log frame)

Project Hierarchy	Original Indicator	Analysis	Revised Indicator
Impact/Goal level	Conservation considerations of the Egyptian beetle integrated into national and international policies to promote conservation of biological diversity.	What timescales in envisioned? Which policies will be influenced?	By June 2017, the Egyptian biodiversity policy will include regulations to protect the rare Egyptian beetle. By June 2017, the Egyptian beetle will be included on CITES Annex II.
Outcome/Purpose level	Educational materials developed by the communities.	Is this is output level indicator? What change does the production of education materials stimulate? There is no time indication. How many communities- all of the targeted communities? There is no specificity related to the types of education materials.	As a result of community led trainings, there is an increase of awareness of conservation in 15 communities by end of project.
	Sustainable income derived from Carbon Sequestration Project by year 2.	Where is the carbon sequestration project? How much income? Who will receive income? What is the milestone? When in Y2 will income be received?	By end of Y2, 20 households receive 5 USD income from Carbon Sequestration project.
	Annual survey of community forest area completed and integrated into community management forest area plans.	Is this an input/output level indictor? What is the change expected. When will this happen?	By month 12/24/36 annual survey of community forest area shows an increase of 5% in positive indicator species. The site community management plans are reviewed and updated in Months 13/25 and 36.
Output level	Working groups of CSOs and governments on issues related to climate change established by Y2.	How many working groups?	By Y2, Mission statements and roles and responsibilities established for 5 working groups on climate change issues.

5. Presenting Evidence of Success

In order to verify that indicators have been achieved, it is important to identify during the design stage what materials you will use to verify this, often called your ‘means of verification’. In essence this is the ‘source’ material that supports your accounts of achievement. These could be public domain/accessible documents such as annual reports, or could be materials that the project will need to collate and publish themselves. Examples of materials used includes:

- publications,
- surveys,
- meeting minutes,
- newspaper articles,
- project notes,
- reports,
- tapes,
- videos etc.

It is important to remember these sources will be used by the project team to verify progress, but also by outside reviewers.

6. Monitoring and Evaluation Planning

All applications must complete a monitoring and evaluation plan as part of their application. It enables projects to plan what data needs to be collected, who collects this data, when the data should be collected and how they should collect it. This can be built into project work plans, roles and responsibilities of team members, job specifications etc.

Indicator	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Household income	X			
Animal sightings		X		
Qualifications achieved				X